

# A Summer's Dream

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A lion among ladies is a most  
dreadful thing.

William Shakespeare.  
A Midsummer Night's Dream

*“Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,  
And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.”*

*William Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night's Dream*



“Vincent always said, ‘Shakespeare knew everything’...” Catherine frowned at the open book in her hands. “But, this is amazing. Why didn’t I understand it, before?”

Seated on a chair at her balcony table, she’d been leafing through the old volume Vincent had gifted to her. The pages had fallen open naturally, as if impatient for her to focus on their written meaning.

She traced the Bard’s words again, with her fingertip. She repeated them beneath her breath. To her, they now made perfect sense.

*“Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion’s neck. And he himself must speak through, saying thus—or to the same defect—‘Ladies,’ or ‘Fair ladies, I would wish you’ or ‘I would request you’ or ‘I would entreat you, not to fear, not to tremble, my life for yours.’ If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life. No, I am no such thing. I am a man as other men are...”*

“Catherine...” Vincent queried softly, from the open bedroom doorway to the balcony. “I looked for you, and found you gone. I was worried. What are you reading?”

Lost in her frowning reverie, Catherine's head jerked up at his words. She had left him asleep in her bed...

Even thinking the words made her shiver in the morning light.

Last night had been a breath-taking revelation. She had left his side before dawn. Absently picking up the book from her bedside table, she had made herself a mug of coffee, before retreating to the balcony to process what had finally happened between them. And what it meant to them both.

She opened her mouth, intending a reply to Vincent, but any words of explanation dried in her throat. It was almost as if she was still dreaming, so ethereal did her love appear to her now.

Standing behind the scant shelter of the drifting, gauzy curtains hanging in the open doorway, in the lightening rose of the dawn, Vincent seemed as the character she had just quoted from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

*More dream than man. But more real than any flight of fantasy...*

“Good morning...” Catherine’s cheeks warmed, her slow smile full of remembered passion. “I couldn’t sleep. I...I needed to think. I’m sorry I worried you.”

She now knew every inch of his beautiful body was most certainly masculine. It had accommodated itself to each of her feminine curves, as if made for her alone to explore and enjoy.

“I reached for you.” Vincent acknowledged her apology. “But you were gone.” He raised one shoulder eloquently. “I found I...liked having you there, sleeping beside me...” he explained, his tone roughening with yearning.

An unaccustomed flush mantled his cheeks with colour. Standing with his powerful arms folded across the arch of his deep chest, Vincent was naked, except for his unbuttoned denims that had seen better days, so closely did the well-washed fabric outline and define the strength of his thighs. Gone was the deep concealment of voluminous cloak, layers of shirts, and heavy boots.

Catherine’s breathing hitched with renewed desire. Vincent was watching her watch him, his expression full of sensual memories...

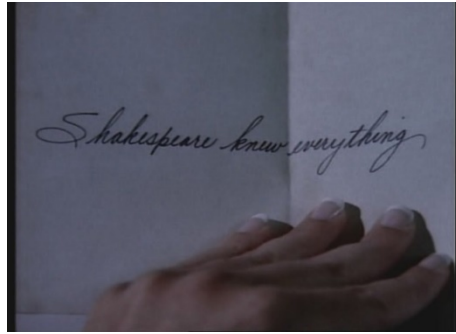
“Me too...” Catherine swallowed, loving what she saw, and glorying in the fact he did not try to hide from her.

*If they both could only remain like this...forever...*

In the deepest reaches of the night she had fully experienced the latent power of that beautiful body, and the beguiling gentleness of Vincent’s questing touch as they fell together into the light of their shared love.

“There is still time...” Gathering the folds of her robe around her, Catherine rose to her feet, abandoning her coffee, and the book, as she moved towards him on naked feet. She held out a beckoning hand.

“You *are* a man as other men are...” She smiled as she reached him, taking his outstretched hands in hers, through the gauzy screen between them. “But then, I have always known that...”



“Ah, the Bard...I thought I recognised the book.” Vincent’s soft chuckle rumbled, as he drew his love closer, until only the barrier of the sheer curtains stood between them. *“Being your slave what should I do but tend upon the hours, and times of your desire? I have no precious time at all to spend; nor services to do, till you require...”*

“My desire...” Wanton need rippled across Catherine’s skin.

“Vincent...I think, we should go back inside. Before you are seen.”

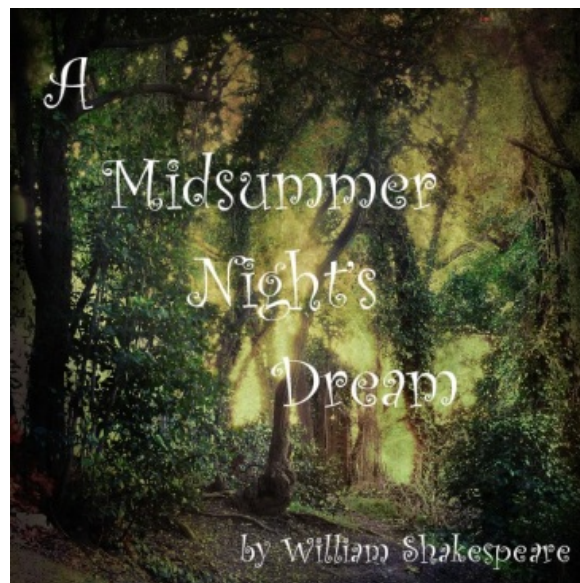
“In time...” Inclining his head, Vincent boldly brought his lips down against hers, seducing and savouring her beauty through the curtain.

Catherine groaned, rising onto her toes to meet him, glorying in the uniqueness of his mouth, making every curve her own with the warm lathe of her tongue. Lifting her arms, she pushed her hands

through the part in the curtains above them, grasping the back of Vincent's head, urging him closer still.

"Catherine, my eternal and only love..." Drawing back for their kiss Vincent cast aside their gauzy concealment with a flick of his wrist. "Always..."

His hands travelled eagerly down the length of Catherine's arching spine to finally cup the shapely curves of her behind. Lifting her into his embrace, he turned them away from the garish light of day, and carried his love back into the welcoming shadows of the apartment, where the wide expanse of the tumbled bed waited for them...



*"He was a man, take him for all in all,  
I shall not look upon his like again."*

*William Shakespeare, Hamlet*

***THE END***

